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TESTIMONY BEFORE THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON
AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION AND FORESTRY

For LD 1945

"An Act to Require Forest Rangers To Be Trained at the Maine Criminal Justice Academy Course."

January 23, 2020

Senator Dill, Representative Hickman, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, I am Patty Cormier, Director of the Maine Forest Service and I am providing testimony in favor of LD 1945, "An Act to Require Forest Rangers to be Trained at the Maine Criminal Justice Academy Course."

There are several reasons why I am in strong support for this bill. First, it would reduce the cost for the department and taxpayer substantially to send a ranger to the MCJA. Additionally, this would better streamline the training process and coordination and reduce the time that rangers are taken out of the field to train the new recruits. Lastly, and most importantly, we do not have the numbers of new hires to justify internal full basic law enforcement training.

As written in MRS 25 §2804-C, "Basic law enforcement training, core curriculum requirements" forest rangers are exempt from the requirement that they attend the basic law enforcement training program at the Maine Criminal Justice Academy (MCJA). This does not mean that they can't attend, but it does mean that they are not a priority. With the long waiting list at the academy, it is unlikely a ranger would ever be included on the list to attend.

This is a practical bill that saves time and resources for our department. I want to be clear that this is in no manner a bill to indirectly change the core mission of rangers within the Maine Forest Service.

Our Chief Forest Ranger, Bill Hamilton, is here to provide testimony and to share more of the details. We are available to answer any questions the committee may have and will have staff present at the work session.

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